

Commercial Building
3 North Water Street
Mobile
Mobile County
Alabama

HABS No. AIA-795

HABS
AIA,
49-MOBI,
172-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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COMMERCIAL BUILDING

Location: 3 North Water Street, Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama
Geographic Location Code: 01-2100-097

Present Use: Demolished in 1969 for Water Street Urban Renewal Project.

Statement of This is a small commercial brick building with cast-iron
Significance: details, typical of Mobile's waterfront district in the
mid-nineteenth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1860.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The small lot upon which this building stands (approximately 24' x 84') has changed ownership often and has been in the hands of speculators continually from 1826 until the present day. A building existed on the lot at least as early as 1829, but the cast-iron details on the existing structure would suggest that it was constructed immediately prior to the Civil War. The original use of the building has not been determined, but it has been occupied by a number of tenants and businesses.
4. Builder or contractor: Unknown

B. Bibliography:

Mobile Deed Books, Probate Court Record Division, Mobile County.

Prepared by Linda Carroll
Student Historian
August 29, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Although small, this building is well proportioned and has fine decorative elements of cast iron that identify it as an example of the Classical Revival style in mid-nineteenth-century Mobile.
2. Condition of fabric: The building was in fair condition before demolition in 1969.

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B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A two-story building, the facade measures 23'-4" and is divided into three bays. Both sides are party walls, and the depth of the building was not determined.
2. Foundations: Not accessible.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: This is a brick bearing wall construction between two party walls. The brick on the facade was painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Not accessible.
5. Porches, stoops: There is a continuous narrow stoop 6" above the sidewalk covered with a cast-iron tread.
6. Chimneys: One double-flue chimney is visible on the south wall.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The three bays on the first floor are framed by brick piers with cast-iron capitals and two cast-iron fluted Corinthian columns set in antis. The piers and columns carry an entablature with a plain frieze and a cast-iron denticulated cornice terminated at either end by a curious bracket. Between the columns and piers are glazed double doors and transoms. Each door and transom has two lights, with convex sections at the corners. Simple iron grilles are in place behind the glass.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The three second-story windows are modern steel, pivoted with curved fixed lights at the top. Considering other buildings in the area of the same period, these modern windows probably replaced the original double-hung wooden sash with two-over-three lights. The windows have cast-iron bracketed sills and ornamental hoods. The hoods are centered by an elaborate escutcheon and moulded with acanthus and rope bands.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof is gabled with the ridge running parallel to the facade, and is covered with asbestos shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: A bracketed cast-iron cornice, similar to the one below, crowns the facade.

C. Description of Interior:

The interior was not accessible.

D. General setting and orientation:

This building is located on Water Street between Dauphin and St. Francis Streets, facing east. It is flanked by similar buildings in an area that was once the heart of Mobile's commercial district.

Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins
Supervising Architect
National Park Service
July 26, 1966
and
Charles A. Herrington
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
August 16, 1972

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as a cooperative project during the summer of 1966 between the Historic American Buildings Survey and various agencies, organizations, and individuals of the City of Mobile. The Historic American Buildings Survey supplied the project supervisor, Woodrow W. Wilkins, and three draughtsmen, Carl J. Rosenberg (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Michael R. Foil (Auburn University), and Lowell K. West (University of Kentucky). One draughtsman, Elbert L. Coleman (Alabama A & M) was provided by the Mobile Housing Board, which agency administers urban renewal. The services of an additional draughtsman, James Eley, specifically designated as an architectural student from Auburn University, were made possible by contributions from numerous local architects and businessmen. The Historic Mobile Preservation Society, in agreement with the History Department of Springhill College, provided a student historian, Linda Carroll. Office space was supplied by the City of Mobile through the City Planning Commission. Roy Thigpen, a local photographer, was contracted to supply the photographs. All local arrangements were made by the Mobile Historic Development Commission, Mrs. Nancy N. Holmes, President. The project was edited during the summer of 1972 by Charles A. Herrington, Architectural Historian, in a cooperative effort between the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Mobile Historic Development Commission.